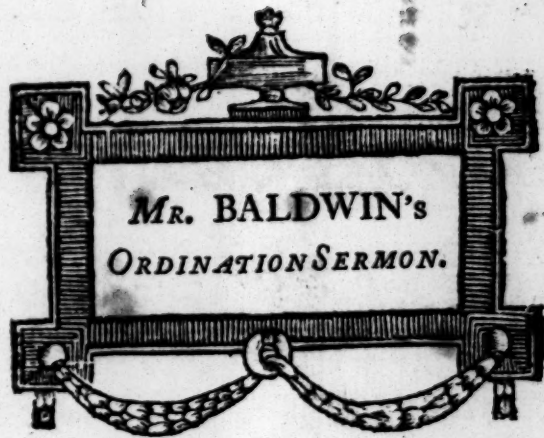
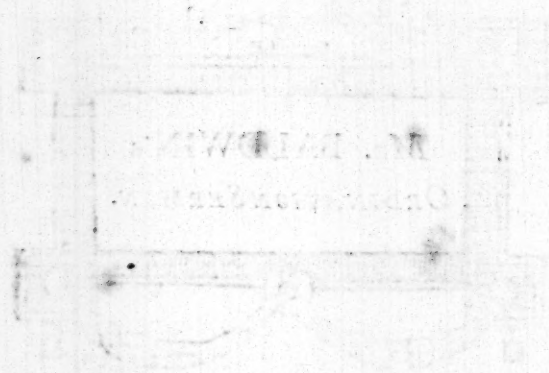


Mrs. M. West

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S E R M O N

DELIVERED AT BRIDGEWATER,

DECEMBER 17, 1794.

AT THE

O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE

REV. DAVID LEONARD

TO THE

WORK OF AN EVANGELIST.

K.

BY THOMAS BALDWIN, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

PUBLISHED BY DESIRE.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOSEPH BUMSTEAD, UNION-STREET.

1795.

P. R. M. O. N.

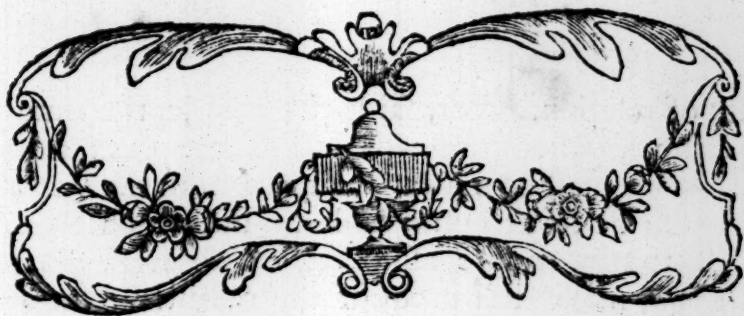
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M. P. A. D. I. C. T. I. O. N. I. S.





AN

Ordination Sermon.

2 TIMOTHY iv. 5.

—DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST.—

THE Office and Work of a minister of the Gospel, must be considered as most sacred and important. He is indeed a messenger of the Lord of hosts, an ambassador of Jesus Christ, commissioned and sent by him to preach the everlasting Gospel to a dying world. Hence we see the propriety of the apostle's solemn charge in the context. I charge thee (saith he) before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who at his appearing and kingdom shall judge the quick and dead, *preach the word*.—How calculated this serious address, to call up and fix the attention of Timothy. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

This solemn charge was enforced by several weighty considerations, such as the presence of the great God, and the Lord Jesus Christ the final Judge. Also, the approaching decline of the

state of religion. For, saith the apostle, the time will come, when they will not endure *sound doctrine*—but shall turn away their ears from the *truth*, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, *do the work of an evangelist*, make full proof of thy ministry : for I am now ready to be offered, I shall soon be released from these bonds in which I am now held as a prisoner ;—the time of my departure is at hand. And although I have neither strength, nor courage of my own, yet through grace I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness ; which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing. Surely words could not be clothed with more solemnity ; nor duty urged by reasons more important.

This dying, but triumphant address of the apostle, can hardly fail of exciting in the breast of every faithful minister, the most ardent desire to emulate this holy man. I have finished my course, saith he ; I shall no more travel from place to place, to make known a Saviour's love. The time of my departure is at hand. I must shortly put off this tabernacle ; and ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. But thou my son Timothy, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus ; and with all watchfulness, patience, and diligence, *do the work of an evangelist*.

In order to assist your inquiries upon the present occasion, we shall attempt to consider,

- I. The Office of an Evangelist.
- II. The necessary Qualifications. And
- III. The important Work.

I. Then, we are to consider the Office of an evangelist.

This Office has been thought by many, to have been below Apostles and Prophets; and above Pastors and Teachers; and also, to have been extraordinary, and to have ceased with the apostolic age. But whether this opinion were justly founded on scripture evidence, will more fully appear as we proceed.

The term *evangelist*, is derived from a *Greek* word, which signifies *a messenger, or carrier of good tidings*. And to whom can this title be applied with more propriety, than to ministers of the Gospel, who are sent with the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ?

The word *evangelist*, is but twice used in our translation excepting in the text. The first is in the account given of Paul and his company, who came to Cesarea, and entered into the house of Philip the *evangelist*. * Whether he were so called to denote his office, or to distinguish him from an apostle of the same name, is not certain. The account given of him, is, That he was driven out of Jerusalem by Paul while a persecutor, and that he fled to Samaria, and preached the word in that city; and baptized those who became converts to Christianity. From thence he went towards Gaza, and in the way he joined the Ethiopian's chariot; preached Jesus to him, and baptized him. And after this he was found at Azotus, and passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Cesarea.

There is nothing in this account, that would lead us to suppose Philip to be above ordinary Pastors and Teachers. He preached the Gospel, and baptized those who were converted under his ministry. Do not ordinary Teachers do the same? He did not lay hands upon them in order to their

* Acts xxi. 18.

receiving the Holy Ghost, as that was not the work of ordinary ministers, but left that for the apostles to do.

Besides, he is said to be one of the seven of whom mention is made Acts vi. 5, who, from the nature of their appointment have generally been thought to be Deacons. And no person it is presumed, would attempt to prove *their office* to be above *Pastors and Teachers*.

The other instance, is in Paul's account of the Gifts bestowed on the Church by her ascended Lord, Who gave *some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers*.* The argument, in favour of the opinion now under consideration, is principally drawn, from the order in which the Gifts are here placed. But it does not appear conclusive, any more than the *Papistical* argument in favour of the Priority and Supremacy of Peter, because he is mentioned before the other apostles. They could not all be mentioned first.

We will now, my dear hearers, consider this office more particularly as it relates to Timothy. He is charged in the text to *do the work of an evangelist*. Hence it is evident he was of this character. But what propriety would there be, in giving the same things in charge to ordinary Teachers, which were given to evangelists, in case they were far above them in office? It is presumed, Paul would not have charged Timothy to have done the work of an *apostle*; unless he were satisfied, that the *signs* of an apostle, could have been wrought by him. †

Have not the two epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus (who were both evangelists) been considered by Christians in every age, as a principal directory to ministers? And has there ever been a charge given when setting them apart to the sacred office, that the sentiments, and much of the language

* Eph. iv. 11. † Acts v. 12. and 2 Cor. xii. 12.

were not taken from these epistles ? I conclude not. If the office of an evangelist were extraordinary, and ceased with the apostolic age, there would seem a manifest impropriety in giving the same things in charge to ministers of the present day, which were given to them.

Although I would not rashly leave the beaten path, or renounce the judgment of those, to whose superiour learning and abilities I owe a deference ; yet I will hazard an opinion, that the principal difference between an Evangelist, and Pastors and Teachers, was this ; the former was sent to itinerate from place to place, and spread the glad tidings of salvation far and wide ; also occasionally to administer ordinances ; * whilst the latter had the charge of some particular Church or Flock, and their administration more immediately confined to them. †

The account given of Timothy, well agrees with this idea of an evangelist. He was a companion of the apostle in his travels ; and was sent by him to *Corinth*, *Philippi*, and *Thessalonica*. But whether he ever had the pastoral care of the church at Ephesus is disputed. It is however certain, that the apostle left him there for a season, and afterwards called him away. ‡ He might indeed have itinerated for a season, and afterwards taken a particular charge.

From these observations, we hope to be freed from the charge of impropriety, in applying the office of an evangelist, to any Christian Minister ordained at large. We therefore proceed,

II. To consider the *Qualifications* for this office.

The leading, and absolutely necessary qualifications of a preacher, consist chiefly, in *natural gifts*, a heart *sanctified by grace*, a good degree of *acquired knowledge*, and a *special call* to the work.

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• Acts viii. 12, 38. † Chap. xx. 28. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 3. and 2 Tim. iv. 9.

We begin then with natural Gifts : for where the foundation is not laid in nature, there is little reason to expect the deficiency will be supplied, either by *grace* or *art*. Grace may sanctify, and Art may improve ; and yet neither fully supply the want of natural abilities. We are all members of one great body, and every member has its proper office ; but to put a member in a place for which it was never designed in nature, would evidently make a schism in the body. And perhaps one reason, why so many persons appear to so little advantage in the world, is because they act out of their proper place.

Among the natural Gifts necessary, we may observe first, a clear and comprehensive *understanding*. A person who cannot readily understand the nature of a proposition, or feel the force of an argument, cannot be qualified to teach others. Whatever confusion of ideas may be in his own understanding, the same will attend his communications to others.

Without that clearness of understanding, which shall enable him in some good degree, to comprehend the general system of revealed Truth, he will be constantly liable to give wrong constructions, and preach inconsistencies. We may next add,

Sound judgment. Some there are, who appear to have a considerable stock of knowledge and information ; and yet want judgment to use it to their own advantage, or to communicate it in a profitable acceptable manner to others. Every thing is beautiful in its season. The want of judgment to time things properly, often prevents their good effect ; and sometimes occasions great confusion. A preacher ought to be able to judge when to speak, and when to refrain from speaking. When to *rebuke*, and when to *console* ; when to *reprove*, and when to *exhort* and comfort his hearers.

To a clear understanding and accurate judgment we may add, a *retentive memory*. It will be acknowledged however, that all useful teachers are not blessed alike with this gift. But as the Gospel is said

to be committed to earthen vessels, it is presumed they will retain in their memories, much of its precious treasure. The mind richly furnished with *truth*, will enable the preacher to bring out of this treasure, things both new and old. Besides, if a person were to begin to study the oracles of truth, and could not retain in memory each part, how could he connect the whole? If he were to read in the Revelation of John, the glorious triumphs of the conquering Redeemer; and that he hath upon his vesture a name written—KING of kings and LORD of lords; he might forget that the same Person had been mentioned in Genesis under the character of the *seed* of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head.

But some there are, no doubt, who can think accurately, and form to themselves a rational system; and yet cannot communicate their ideas in an easy, instructive manner to others. Hence it is necessary that they should be *Apt to teach*. This may be considered as a natural gift, rather than any thing acquired. This necessary trait in the ministerial character was not omitted by the great apostle.

Aptness to teach, does by no means consist in an empty loquacity; nor in a man's being able to tell all that he knows: but in his being able to arrest the attention of his audience (not for the moment to make them stare) but to hold the mind in pleasing captivity; and by a soft, irresistible eloquence, to infuse sentiments of truth into the soul; and in such a manly, rational manner, exhibit ideas to the understanding, as shall leave the most indelible impressions. But good natural abilities, and a bad heart, would but furnish a man to do mischief; therefore we proceed,

2. To consider *Grace*, as an important qualification in a teacher. By grace, we mean a gracious principle implanted in the soul, producing holy affection: for a graceless preacher of the Gospel of the Grace of God, would seem a very inconsistent character. We cannot suppose that the all-gracious Redeemer would

employ Wolves to watch over, to feed and comfort his Lambs.* How can a person teach another the way, which he never knew himself? May he not properly be called a blind Leader of the blind? Or how could he describe the infinite evil of sin, which he had never seen, or show the exposed situation of the sinner, if he had never felt it himself? And how faintly would he describe the infinite charms and loveliness of a Saviour, whose beauty had never attracted his heart! "It would be extremely difficult," said an ingenious Writer, "for a man to persuade me, that he was anxiously concerned for the salvation of my soul, who never took any care of his own. †"

The minister of the Gospel, is not to direct inquiring souls to *go* to Christ; but to invite them to "*come and see*;" which supposes, he has found, and is in possession of the good he recommends. But he must add to his faith, not only virtue, but knowledge also.

Which brings us,

3. To consider, what *Acquirements* are necessary. He that teaches the knowledge of God to mankind, can never have too much information himself. Yet some particular acquirements are more especially necessary. As first, a thorough knowledge of the system of revealed Truth. The inspired Scriptures, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. No other knowledge can make up a deficiency in this. It was

* The instance of Judas, has often been mentioned by those who plead for graceless ministers, as authorizing such a procedure: "For," say they, "Christ chose him, among the rest." It is true he chose twelve, one of whom he said was a devil; and it may be remembered there was a prophecy to be fulfilled, which none but a devil, or one under his influence, could accomplish; for no real friend could have betrayed and sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver. But however, if any choose to be considered as the successors of Judas, we shall not pretend to controvert the justice of their claim.

† Locke on Toleration.

said of Timothy, that from a child he had known the holy scriptures, which are able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.

Next to the knowledge of the truth, which we preach, we may suppose it necessary to have a good understanding of the language which we make use of in our administrations. Although Paul did not affect excellency of speech, or use enticing words of man's wisdom; yet he exhorted Titus to use *sound speech*, that could not be condemned.

The knowledge of the *dead languages*, though highly desirable, is not thought absolutely necessary. For although Christ upon certain occasions, and for particular purposes, bestowed the Gift of tongues upon the apostles; yet even at the day of Pentecost, we have no reason to suppose they spake with any more tongues, than there were persons of different languages to hear them. Nor is it certain that they had this Gift at all times, to make a wanton use of at their own pleasure. There is less evidence still, that ordinary teachers, even of the apostolic age, were favoured with the gift of tongues. But however, if any are so highly favoured as to say with the apostle, "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;" let them not forget that he adds, "yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." *

Also, a good knowledge of ecclesiastical history, is to be considered as a very necessary and interesting acquirement. From this source, we are able to trace the footsteps of the flock of Christ back to the early dawn of Christianity. We learn what scenes of distress the Church has passed through; what persecutions she has endured for his name's sake, and not fainted. Also, what Declensions and Reformations have succeeded each other; together with the accomplishment of several scripture prophecies.

* 2 Cor. xiv. 18, 19.

It will be granted that there are many other useful acquirements, though not so absolutely necessary to qualify a person to preach the Gospel. Such as a general knowledge of the Arts and Sciences, and of human nature. These are to be considered as useful appendages, rather than constituent parts. But although a man were possessed of all the accomplishments which have now been described, yet "How should he preach except he be sent?"* Which brings us,

4. To consider the *Call* to this important work.

No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God.—And though we do not expect ministers in the present day, to be called and qualified in the same extraordinary manner as the apostles were; yet undoubtedly if they would claim that precious promise, "Lo I am with you;" they must be satisfied that Christ has called them to the work.

There are various opinions respecting the nature of this *Call*; and what are sufficient evidences of it. Some have supposed, that a *desire* for the salvation of souls, and to see the Redeemer's interest advanced, is a sufficient warrant to engage in the work. But these desires are not peculiar to ministers; all good men have them in a greater or less degree; and especially young converts, when they are first brought to the knowledge and love of Christ, have strong desires that others should enjoy the same happiness; but we cannot suppose every good man called to be a preacher. Others confide in that stale maxim, *vox populi, vox Dei*; but we are assured, that the people have often chosen false prophets to prophecy smooth things, whom God said he had not sent, and that they prophesied lies in his name.

But may we not rather conclude, that those whom Christ Calls, he first fixes their heart upon the work; so that like Moses they are willing to forego the pleasures of a court, and suffer affliction with the people of God. And although the Church may appear like the

burning bush, they are willing to devote themselves to its service.—We may also suppose that a treasure of the word is committed to them; so that they may say with the Prophet, His word is in my heart as a burning fire in my bones, I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot stay.* It is not the prospect of worldly pomp and glory; but the love of Christ which constrains them to preach. A dispensation of the Gospel being thus committed to them, they feel a necessity laid upon them to preach it.

These impressions of truth upon the mind, together with the coincident events of divine providence, will undoubtedly afford satisfactory evidence respecting a Call to this work. And if like Paul they are not disobedient to the *heavenly call*, they may hope for the approbation of their God, whilst they cheerfully and faithfully, do the work of an evangelist.

From this brief view of the Office and Qualifications of an evangelist, we proceed,

III. To consider the Work.

This work is principally contained, in the solemn charge in the context; *Preach the Word*. To preach the word undoubtedly implies, the whole system of doctrines revealed in the Bible.—It will be natural to begin,

1. With the Being of a God; as the belief of this article is the foundation of all religion.

The light of nature, as well as the written word, asserts his being and perfections. Whereever we turn our eyes we are struck with evident marks of divinity. As when we view a curious machine, and observe how the complicated parts move and act upon each other, we at once infer, that it must have been constructed by some designing agent. In like manner when we behold the stupendous system of the universe, the regular order, harmony, and established laws by which all the

parts of this vast machine move and act; we feel the irresistible evidence, that it could not be the work of *undesigning Chance*; but of the all-wise, and powerful Jehovah.

And although by the visible things which are made and seen, is understood his eternal Power and Godhead; yet it hath pleased God to make more clear and familiar displays of himself in his word. Herein he hath revealed himself in the character of Triune God. A Trinity in Unity. Reason and Philosophy, have pretended either to comprehend or reject the inexplicable truth; but still it remains a part of the word which we have to preach.

I shall not attempt a full elucidation of the doctrine, but content myself with mentioning two or three passages of scripture, which appear to me clearly to assert it. John declares, that there are *Three* that bear record in heaven, The FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST, and these THREE ARE ONE. The apostle Paul in his benediction upon the Church at Corinth, blessed them in the name of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. Peter addressed his brethren, as Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the *Father*, through sanctification of the *Spirit*, and sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ*. Thus we find the apostles agreed in asserting this sublime, this incomprehensible truth.*

It has been a question with some, Whether the scriptures attribute personality to the Spirit? To which it may be answered, that Christ, when speaking of the Spirit, uses the personal pronouns, *He*, and *Him*. I will send HIM unto you, and when HE is come, HE shall not speak of HIMSELF, &c.

It will not hence be concluded, that the Christian believes in three Gods, nor in one God and two emanations; but in One God in Three Persons.

We are not only to preach that God *is*, but that he

* 1 John v. 7. 2. Cor. xiii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 2.

is a *rewarder* of all them that diligently seek him. In his word he hath revealed his lovely perfections, and proclaimed his name to be The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty. Who is a God like unto him, That pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*

The New Testament writers declare that God is *love*; and that he so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life. And that God is in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

2. In *preaching the word*, it may be necessary next to bring into view the character of man, and consider him in his present fallen state. It is evident he is not what he once was. God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. When he first came out of his Creator's hand, he was like his other works, pronounced good.—But not long after God declared that All flesh had corrupted his way;—and that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually.† David, in a very striking manner, thus describes the infidelity and depravity of man, The fool hath said in his heart there is no God. And when the Lord looked from heaven to see if there were any which sought after God; it was said, They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one. § The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. || The scriptures are full of this doctrine; and daily, melancholy observation, evinces the truth of it.

But it is not enough for a preacher to tell men that they are depraved: it is necessary to tell them what

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* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. and Mic. vii. 18. † Gen. vi. 5—12.
§ Psa. xiv. 1, 3. || Isa. i. 5.

depravity consists in. There are many who are willing to allow that they are depraved, but at the same time consider this as an excuse for their wicked conduct. Such persons should be told, that depravity does not consist in the loss of any of the *natural faculties* necessary to love and obey God; but in a wicked *indisposition* to that which is right; and a fixed, voluntary bias to that which is evil. And the reason why wicked men do not love moral beauty and excellence, is not from any defect in the natural faculties, but the want of a right disposition of heart. The sinner cannot love God, because he hates him; and he hates him, because he chooses to hate him. He does not come to the light, because he loves darkness rather than light. † The wretchedness of man in his fallen state—does not consist in the loss of natural abilities, but in the want of a right disposition to improve them; and is not to be considered so much his misfortune, as his crime.

This being the nature of depravity, it is easy to see the absurdity of pleading it as an excuse, for our remaining impenitent, or neglecting to comply with whatever God requires. Our being indisposed to that which is right and fit, can never lessen our obligation. Our obligation to love and serve God, does not arise from our disposition to love; but from our capacity, and the suitableness of the Object. Therefore, so long as our capacity for loving moral excellence remains, and God continues to be worthy of the Love, Reverence, and Esteem, of rational beings, our obligation must continue. Hence we are led to say with the Apostle; The law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good; but *we* are carnal, sold under sin. In which state we should for ever remain, if infinite goodness did not interpose.—Which leads us,

3. To observe, that in preaching the word, or doing the work of an Evangelist, it will be necessary to hold up to view the covenant of Redemption, as including the Atonement made by Christ.

It is evident from the sacred writings, that He who calleth things which are not, as though they were; and who clearly sees the end from the beginning, did foresee that state of guilt and ruin, in which sin would involve the World. Therefore, God early entered into covenant with his Son, to redeem from guilt and misery the chosen race.

One interesting article of this covenant, was, That the Son of God's love, should in the fulness of time be born of a woman; and that he should be *made under the same law* which man had transgressed, that he might Redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* This great affair was transacted in the Person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; who left the height of celestial glory, and took on him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. †

Christ, in order to magnify the Law and make it honourable in the view of all intelligent beings, yielded the most unreserved and perfect obedience to its precepts; and testified that one jot or tittle of it should not fail 'till all were fulfilled. This he did not from necessity, but of a willing mind. "Thy law," said he, "is in my heart. I delight to do thy will, O God." This perfect obedience of our glorious Redeemer to the divine law, abundantly demonstrated that the law was good. And in this way, as well as by his doctrine, he condemned sin in the flesh.

But, it was not the spotless purity of his nature, nor the perfect obedience of his life, that could make Atonement for the transgressions that were under the first covenant. ‡ The Lamb of God must bleed! This commandment he received of his Father, to lay down his life. § Hence the blood of Christ is called the *blood of the covenant*, and of the *everlasting covenant*. §

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † Phil. ii. 7, 8. ‡ Or Testament. See Heb. ix. 15. || John x. 18. § Zech. ix. 11. Heb. xiii. 20.

This blood speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Whether this Atonement, made by Christ, be sufficient for the Whole human race, or only a part; or whether the Redemption is to be considered *General* or *Particular*, has long been disputed. If we include in Redemption the deliverance of the subject, it is, undoubtedly, *Particular*; but if nothing more be meant, than satisfaction to the Law of God, it seems more consistent to consider it *General*. That Law must have been completely honoured to save one of the human race: it required no more to save millions. It will not be supposed that Christ suffered for sinners individually; for A, a certain quantity, for B, less, and for C, more; for then must he have often suffered since the world began; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And by this one-offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. It therefore follows, that those who embrace the salvation of Christ, will have a whole Saviour, as completely as if only they were saved. And on the other hand, those who reject Christ, will be guilty of rejecting and setting at naught the whole of his merit and sufferings.

From this view of the subject, the preacher of the Gospel will feel himself at liberty, to spread far and wide the name of the Saviour; and invite the ends of the earth to look unto him and be saved. † He will tell the perishing sinner, that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. He will urge it as the *command of God*, that *all men every where repent*. * And will encourage the penitent sinner to hope in the mercy of that Saviour, in whom we have *redemption through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins. †

Whilst we meditate upon the wonders of redeeming love, and proclaim the efficacy of the blood of the Cross; we feel our souls expand with gratitude to the

† Isa. xlv. 22. * Acts xvii. 30. † Col. i. 14.

Lamb that was slain, and exclaim with the Heavenly host, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. *—But we hasten,

4. To show the necessity of the *influences of the Spirit*, to regenerate, and form the heart anew.

Notwithstanding the rich, and ample provision which God has made for the salvation of sinners; and the friendly overtures of mercy, contained in the Proclamation of the Gospel; the heart of the sinner still retains its native enmity. And the Preacher often has to make the melancholy complaint, Lord who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Like his Divine Master, he preaches, that men must be born again. At the same time he knows, that the Spirit, (though like the wind, it blows where it listeth) must effect the work. He knows that the Holy Spirit must take of the things of Christ, and show them unto his people, or they will never know them savingly.

This will lead him to feel his dependence on God, and to be much in prayer for the influences of the Spirit to accompany his administrations, that they may be profitable to his hearers. Always bearing in mind that Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but it is God alone who can give the increase. If the minister of Christ is blessed with success, he does not attribute it to his own skill or exertions, knowing that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth;" and nothing short of the "Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead," can effect the work. And whatever pretensions any may make of being the children of God who are not influenced by his Spirit; he is assured, that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We come,

5. To observe, That the preacher in doing the work of an evangelist, will constantly inculcate upon

his hearers, the necessity of *Repentance* towards God, and *Faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ. He will endeavour to imitate those who went out and preached, that *men should repent*. Nor will spare to use the plain language of his Saviour, and tell the thoughtless Epicure, and the self-deceived hypocrite, with all other impenitent sinners, that Except they repent they shall all likewise perish. He will tell them, that true repentance is a Godly sorrow for sin, arising from a sense of the holiness and purity of the divine law; and from the infinitely evil, and odious nature of sin. He will urge repentance, as present duty, and not direct the sinner to a course of preparatory exercises, in order to fit him for it.

The preacher will inforce this duty by showing the exposed situation of the impenitent, and the utter impossibility of their enjoying heaven with such a state of mind. Motives to this duty may be drawn from the Divine Commands which enjoin it; the goodness of God which leads to it; and the certainty of death, where repentance will be hidden from their eyes. And lest any should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and so remain impenitent, he will tell them that The ax now lies at the root of the trees, and every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit will be hewn down and cast into the fire.*

He will also connect with evangelical repentance, Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith in Christ is not distinguished from repentance, as proceeding from a different source or principle, but as being a different exercise of the Soul. Repentance, implies a view of the righteousness, holiness, and purity of God's Law; and a sense of the justice, and equity of the sentence passed on the transgressor; while Faith beholds the glorious Surety suffering the torturing pains of the ignominious Cross, to make Atonement for the guilty; and thereby, becoming the end of the

* Matt. iii. 10.

Law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for. It receives the truth upon the credit of Divine testimony; and cheerfully sets to its seal, that God is true.

The necessity of *faith*, appears evident from the nature of things, as well as from the plain declarations of truth: for how could a person be influenced, either by the threatenings or promises of a Being, whose existence he did not believe in. But the testimony of truth must be heard.

Mark, when, recording the great Commission, authorizing the Disciples to go into all the World and preach the Gospel to every Creature, adds, He that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* And the Apostle Paul declared that he received grace and apostleship, for the *obedience of faith* (or that men might believe) among all nations. † And, indeed, without faith, it is impossible to please God; for he that believeth not the record which God hath given of his Son, hath made him a liar. ‡ Which must be considered as a continued affront, offered to the Majesty of heaven, so long as the sinner remains in unbelief.

From this brief view of the nature, and necessity of faith, the minister of Christ will always be ready to give an answer to this anxious inquiry, What shall I do to be saved? He will answer as the Apostle did, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Or should any inquire what shall we do to work the works of God? The answer is ready, This is the work of God (or it is agreeable to his will) that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. §

Nor will the faithful minister dare to treat the matter in such an indifferent light, as to lead his hearers to suppose, that the only disadvantage they will suffer

* Mark xvi. 15, 16. † Rom. i. 5. and xvi. 26. ‡ Heb. xi. 6.
 1 John v. 10. § John vi. 29.

by not helieving, will be the want of present comfort and fatisfaction, whilst they may suppose their eternal state equally safe without it. No ; but in the decided language of inspiration he will tell them, He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

This *faith*, which the Gospel requires, is something more than the cold assent of the mind, that Jesus is the Christ. The Devils have as good a faith as this. But the *faith* of the Gospel, is a living active principle in the soul ; it works by Love and purifies the heart. It not only trusts in the Saviour's merits for pardon and Justification ; but yields a most cheerful, and unreserved obedience to all his commands.

6. In further pursuing this glorious work ; the Preacher will endeavour, not only to have his hearers sound in the faith ; but careful, and diligent in the *practical* part of religion. He will insist on personal holiness of heart and life, as the only rational evidence of grace. The soul cannot be possesst of divine faith, and not act under the influence of it. I will (said Paul to Titus) that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. † And my Brethren, We must add to our faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and charity.

The prudent Teacher, will guard his hearers against error upon the right hand and left. On the one hand he will caution them against concluding, that it is of little consequence what a man believes ; providing, he leads a moral, inoffensive life. He will endeavour to show them, that it is necessary to *believe* right, in order to *act* right. On the other hand he will lead them to see, that an orthodox head, and a vicious heart, will never make a Christian.

That faith which does not produce, or is not

* John iii. 36. † Tit. iii. 8. 2 Pet. i. 6, 7, 9. † James ii. 20.

accompanied with good works, is dead. † So also *those* works which do not spring from love, and are not done in faith, cannot be good in a moral sense.

Our good works however, are not to be considered as the Cause of our justification; but as the fruit and evidence of it. Hence it follows that faith and holiness uniting their influence in the good man, produce those moral and social virtues, which adorn and beautify the Christian character.

But it is not enough that we begin well, and run well for a season, we must continue in well doing. Hence

7. The Preacher will insist on Perseverance, in order to enjoy the promise of eternal life. The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, saith the Lord. Although we do not believe that any who are savingly renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, will ever fall away so as to be finally lost; yet they may greatly decline as to the real life and power of godliness. And if they become remiss and unwatchful, they may be left to fall into temptation and sin, so as to dishonour God, and wound their own souls. But a Covenant-God will visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.* Those whom Christ hath loved with an everlasting love, who have been drawn to him by his loving-kindness, he will continue to love to the end.

Nevertheless, Christians ought to be exhorted to a vigorous and diligent perseverance in holiness, as necessary to their own comfort, and the edification of others. As men in general form their opinions of religion more from the lives of its professors, than from the doctrines they profess. And the promise is, He that shall *endure* to the end, the same shall be saved.

Finally, the faithful minister will keep back nothing, that might be profitable to his hearers; he will not shun to declare the whole council of God; and will

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† James ii. 20.

* Psa. lxxxix. 32, 33.

endeavour to keep himself pure from the blood of all men. He will preach Christ crucified, as the only foundation of hope; though it should be a stumbling-block to some, and foolishness to others.

8. And lastly. The Evangelist is not only to preach the word, but occasionally to administer the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In doing of which, he will conscientiously adhere to the institutions as they were delivered by Christ, and left on record in the New Testament. He will not knowingly administer either of the Ordinances to unqualified subjects, or in a way not particularly warranted by the institution; but will endeavor to keep them as they were delivered to the Church.

In the faithful discharge of this sacred office, he will deliver his own soul, and may be happily instrumental of saving those who hear him. He will enjoy the satisfaction of an approving conscience, and will be finally accepted of his Judge in peace.

Having thus briefly considered the Work of an Evangelist, as was proposed; we come now to close with a few words of address. It may be proper to begin with the Candidate for ordination.

My dear Brother; You are this day devoting yourself to the service of God in his temple; and in the presence of heaven and earth, solemnly consecrating your time and talents to the work of the ministry.

Your work, though highly pleasing and honorable, will be difficult and arduous. An Angel's strength would be insufficient for it.—But you have the promised influences of the Holy Spirit; and if Christ has called you to go and preach the Gospel, he has said, Lo I am with you.—

In discharging the important duties of your office, you must expect to meet with difficulties and trials; but if you go in the name and strength of your Master, you will be enabled to say, None of these things move me. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.

You will permit me, dear Sir, to observe to you the words of Christ, in the first Commission given to his disciples: Behold (said he) I send you forth, as Sheep in the midst of Wolves; be ye therefore *wise* as serpents, and *harmless* as doves. This wisdom alone, would form a disagreeable character. It might excite fear and dread; but could never command love and esteem. You will therefore see the necessity of uniting with it, the humble, harmless, loving disposition of the Dove, in order to form an engaging character; as this only will make us wise to win Souls. The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

Your *motives*, my dear Brother, for engaging in this sacred work, are known only to God and your own heart; but from your situation in life, and the advantages you enjoy of a *polite and liberal education*; and the little prospect you have of worldly aggrandizement, in preaching the doctrine of the Cross, we are led to hope, you are sincerely desirous of promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of your fellow-men. Your early public profession of religion; your pious walk and conversation; together with the general approbation of those who have heard you, induce us to believe, that Christ hath called you as a chosen vessel, to bear his name among the Gentiles.

If Christ were now to put the solemn question to you my Brother, which he once did to Peter; Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me? Could you lay your hand upon your heart and say; Lord, thou knowest all things; *Thou knowest that I love thee*? If so; go feed his Sheep and feed his Lambs. Go in the strength of the Lord God, and faithfully Do the work of an Evangelist. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Set your face as a flint; never fear the frowns, nor count the smiles of a deceitful world.

Take heed to yourself, and to your doctrine. Let that cheerful sobriety, and decent gravity mark your conduct, that no man may despise your youth,

But be thou an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Let the religion you preach to others be exemplified in your own life.

If Christ has counted you faithful, and put you into the ministry, remember, to him you must give an account, when he shall judge the quick and dead.

May the ever-blessed influences of the Holy Spirit so accompany your labours, that you may have many souls given you as the seals of your ministry here, and which shall be as stars in your future crown of rejoicing. Finally, Be thou faithful unto death, and Christ will give thee a Crown of life.

My dear Brethren in the ministry,

What cause of thankfulness have we to the great Head of the Church, that he is still raising up and sending forth Laborers into his vineyard!

It must afford peculiar pleasure, while we reflect that our Fathers who have borne the heat and burden of the day; whose hoary locks, and furrowed cheeks proclaim, that the time of their departure is at hand; to see that God is raising up young men to fill their places.

The present solemnity brings to remembrance that happy day, when we publicly devoted ourselves to the work of the ministry. But my Brethren, have we not melancholy occasions to say, "We have been unprofitable servants?" Shall we not then be excited to greater watchfulness and assiduity, in our Master's Cause.

I doubt not Brethren, but amidst all the darkness and trials of this present state, you can cheerfully say, "We have a goodly heritage assigned us. The Lord is our inheritance."

Our time Brethren, is short; it may be very short; our work is great, and the reward glorious. Let us emulate the noble example of our glorious Redeemer, who, For the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame. May we keep ourselves pure from the blood of all men; and at

last when we shall be called to give an account of our charge, may we be enabled to present our dear Flocks and say, Here we are and the children whom thou hast graciously given us. And through the merits of the Saviour, may we then find admittance into the joys of our Lord.

The present occasion will also afford joy to all the pious friends of Religion, of every denomination.

My Christian Friends; Your enlarged souls have been taught to rejoice, in the general prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom. You have not the sad occasion this day to say, There are none of all the Sons of Zion which she hath brought forth, to take her by the hand. You see that God is raising up young men, and calling them into the ministry. You will remember that ministers are called *earthen vessels*; and of themselves they are empty ones;—as such therefore, let me intreat you to carry them in your addresses to the throne of grace, to the Fountain, to be filled, that they may come to you in the fulness of the blessing, of the Gospel of Christ. Our preaching will not profit you, unless our Master comes with us. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

While God continues *us* to preach, and *you* to hear, may our improvement and happiness be mutual; 'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and are translated from these abodes of sorrow and darkness, into those bright realms of eternal day. Where we shall behold uncreated Beauty; and with ineffable joy, drink of those rivers of pleasure which flow at God's right hand, for ever and ever.

To conclude,

Dear fellow sinners;

If such there are, in this solemn, this listening Assembly; you will not be offended at the plainness of this address.

We look upon you with a heart-felt concern ; and as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. We cannot feel indifferent to your immortal interests ; but knowing the terror of the Lord, we would fain persuade you, to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on the hope set before you in the Gospel. We consider you as a part of our charge, for whose souls we watch as those who must give account at the great day. If we do it with grief, it must be unprofitable for you.

O Sirs, perhaps some of you, have almost run your race ; the shadows of the evening begin to stretch over you. Some of your last sands are falling : and O !——dreadful to consider ! no preparation for eternity ! Has Christ Commissioned and sent forth his ministers to preach the everlasting Gospel ? Then take heed how you hear ; lest you mourn at last and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof ? And have not obeyed the voice of my *teachers*, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me ? * May you immediately embrace the Saviour, before the pit shut its mouth upon you ; and the things which concern your everlasting peace be hidden from your eyes.

Many more there are in this dear assembly, who are now in the bloom of life. Who can forbear reminding you of the importance, of remembering your Creator in the days of your youth ; and of devoting your early years to his service ? You this day behold one of your fellow youth, publicly engaging in the Cause of Christ ; and devoting his service to your best interests. Despise not his youth ; but as you have opportunity listen to his instructions, and council.

As you my young friends have been favoured with a religious education, and enjoy the blessings of a preached Gospel ; your obligations must be Great,

O let not all these advantages be lost, and your souls lost for ever. To day if you will hear his voice; harden not your heart. It is yet an accepted time, and a day of salvation. Your hearts are now susceptible of the impressions of truth; but a habit in sin may render them callous.

You may fancy to yourselves that the bright scene of life is now but just opening; but remember it may close ere you are aware, and all your future prospects close with it. The awful hour is fast approaching, when conditions of pardon will no more be offered. The mild tone of mercy which has so long sounded in your ears, will give place to the stern voice of justice. Then he that is unrighteous must be unrighteous still; and he that is holy, must be holy still.

May God of his infinite mercy prepare us all to do his will here, and at last receive us to the uninterrupted enjoyment of himself in glory, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory in the Church for ever.





THE
C H A R G E.

BY THE REV. ISAAC BACKUS.

MY dear young Brother, as the part assigned me in this solemnity, is to point out your duty in the great Work into which you have entered, and to charge you to be faithful therein, I shall not be lengthy upon it, after the clear discourse which we have heard upon the subject.

The instructions which the Apostle Paul gave to his son Timothy, are the most suitable for this occasion, of any that I know of. He said to that young minister, 'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. Language cannot describe the characters of men in our day, nor the duty of believers in Christ, more exactly than it was thus done by that inspired Apostle. And what he said to Timothy, as the rule of his duty, and the only way of safety, I now say to you, Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his

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appearing, and kingdom, preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

We ever ought to remember, that the law of God as it was first given to man, discovers nothing of a Mediator, nor of pardon and renewing grace for sinners. This can only be known by pure revelation from God ; and we should take all our ideas, concerning salvation, from his written word, by the teaching of his Holy Spirit. And you are to administer the Ordinance of Baptism, to such subjects only as appear to be believers in Christ, and in the manner which he hath appointed—even to those who give evidence that they have been made dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Upon which our Apostle says, 'Therefore we are *buried* with him, by baptism, into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' You are also to administer the Lord's Supper to those who have been thus baptized, and joined to some regular Church of Christ. Both of these Ordinances have reference to his death as a past event, and to the great obligations which we are laid under to love and obey him. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Heavenly motives should ever govern our hearts, and all our conduct in this life.—And, dear Brother, if thou art faithful in this great Work, thy reward will be, that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away ; which may the Lord grant for Jesus' sake. AMEN.—

THE
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY THE REV. GEORGE ROBINSON.

THE part assigned me in the solemn, but joyful transactions of this day, is Sir, to welcome you into the ministry. And as I have had an opportunity to hear the declaration of your Faith in Christ, System of doctrine, and Call to the sacred Work, I do most cheerfully accept it.

Unanimity and fellowship, were distinguishing characteristics of primitive Christianity. Hence the encomium passed upon the believers of Jerusalem, That they continued in the fellowship of the Apostles. Thus they commended themselves to the world as the disciples of Jesus Christ; who enjoined it upon his followers to cultivate *mutual love*—to be of one mind, and to have fellowship one with another.

As we are in a state where objects of sense, not only attract our attention, but strike our minds with greater force than objects of faith, Ceremony has ever had its peculiar advantages. The Apostles, therefore, in separating their brethren to the great Work of the ministry, not only laid hands on them, but gave them the *right hand*, as a cordial token of their fellowship, and prayers for their success. With warm affection, and in imitation of apostolic practice, I present you, SIR, with the right hand. Accept it as a token of our friendship and love; and of our fraternal fellowship with you, in the arduous but delightful Work of preaching the everlasting Gospel. We are happy to view you as a Brother in the ministry; and with peculiar pleasure bid you welcome to the sacred office. Accept, therefore, our ardent wishes for your welfare in the best of Causes, that you may be faithful unto death, as you watch for souls, as one that must give account to God. Accept at all times our friendly admonitions and assistance; as in return we expect the same from you.

A bundle of slender Officers, when separated, are feeble; but together, have strength: so by disunion we become weak, and give the adversary great advantage. But Zion united and zealous in the Cause of her Lord, shall be as an army with banners. Let us then unite our exertions to advance the interest of our common Redeemer; that we may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. And may he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, direct your ways, and give you grace so to discharge the Work of an Evangelist, as to meet the plaudit of your Judge, Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

Finally, my Brother, Go forth in the strength of the Lord, and may the name of the God of Jacob defend you. May you be the happy instrument of turning many to righteousness, and shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.—AMEN.

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